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MOIRA SHEARER:
"INTERVIEW"

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ADVERTISERS

ASSOCIATIONS

105 Associated Dance Teachers of Southern California
100 Chicago National Association of Dance Masters
89 Dance Masters of California

BOOKS

99 Ballet Book Shop
99 Dancing In Action

94 BINDERS (Dancing Star)

105 CLASSIFIED ADS

FOOTWEAR

106 Capezio
Selva (inside front cover)

RECORDINGS, DANCE

93 Dance Records, Inc.
95 Kimbo Records
101 Russell Records
83 Stepping Tones

ROUTINES BY MAIL

94 Al Gilbert
98 Billy Truehart
95 Eva Varady
101 Kathleen Kavanagh

102 RUBBER STAMPS

SCHOOL PROMOTION AIDS

112 Article: 'You Owe It To Your Child!'

SUPPLY HOUSES, THEATRICAL

93 A&L Theatrical Fabric & Shoe Co.
91 Art Teen Sports Wear
89 Lew Serbin Dance Art Co.
85 Associated Fabrics Corp.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

104 Dancing Star (combination offer)

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INDEX

80 MOIRA SHEARER
(Interview)
Part One of Two Parts

84 LONDON FOOTNOTES

87 THE SIGNATURE OF LOCALITY
J Marks

89 BALLROOM DANCING KNOWS NO AGE

90 INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE CENTER
W. G. Raffe

92 THE CAN CAN AS A BALLROOM DANCE
Walter Whitman

96 MAY I WRITE THE THE NEXT DANCE?
2nd of 2 parts
John Martin

100 THE DANCE IN CHICAGO
Rod Quiros

102 DANCE LINES
Gordon Keith

103 TEACHERS' & STUDENTS' SECTION

105 DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

196 DANCE OF THE EASTER BUNNIES
Mme. Vonka

108 BABY BALLERINA
Al Gilbert

110 ACROBATIC & TUMBLING
22nd in a series
James A. Rozanas

THE COVER

Mary Monro in Ballet Rambert's new 'Lola Montez'. —Photo by Mike Davis

An Informal Interview With:

MOIRA SHEARER

This is the second in a series of Informal Interviews with interesting personalities form the "World of Dance." Moira Shearer was interviewed by a Dancing Star reporter on November 4, 1954, where she was appearing in "Midsummer Night's Dream", at the San Francisco Opera House.

Q. Miss Shearer, isn't your role in Midsummer Night's Dream quite a departure from your usual dance roles?

A. Well, yes, because it isn't primarily a dancing role. So, of course, it's a little different. As you know, this is a play by William Shakespeare and the accent is on the acting, which is something new for me.

Q. How do you like playing this type of thing?

A. Oh, I love it! It's because I want to do it that I'm here in the production at all.

Q. You were born in Scotland, is that correct, Miss Shearer?

A. That's right.

Q. May I ask at what age you began your dance studies — and with whom?

A. Serious dance traning I began when I was ten years old in London. I had previously, at the age of six or seven, attended the usual amount of Saturday morning dancing classes that all little girls do, but the really serious training began when I was ten. It was in London at a theatrical school run by a Miss Fairbairn and then with Nicholas Legat, the ex-cazr's soloist who settled in London and opened a studio there.

Q. Had you always wanted to become a ballerina?

A. Well, no, because at the age of ten you're not thinking about anything except having a very good time and being a little girl. So it wasn't a question of my always wanting to dance.

Q. How long were you in training at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School before you were accepted for the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company?

A. Well, I only went to school for a matter of two or three weeks and then joined the company. I wasn't trained at the school, you see. I am not one of their students.

MOIRA SHEARER AS TITANIA IN 'MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM'

Q. Isn't it rather unusual for one to be accepted for this Ballet Company so soon?

A. I think probably it is, but Ninette de Valois saw me dance with another company when I was fifteen, my first professional engagement on the stage, liked me, and wanted me for the Wells company. As a sort of regulation I went into the school for about two weeks before joining the company.

Q. Miss Shearer, in Hugh Fisher's book, "Dancers of Today," he writes, and I quote: "Margot Fonteyn is the first ballerina to be produced by our national ballet: Moira Shearer is indisputably the second." What ,exactly, did he mean by "national ballet"?

A. I don't know. I've never heard of this before. But I suppose that by "national ballet" he means the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company. Margot Fonteyn is indeed a product of theirs, having been trained there from the age of about fourteen. I feel that this isn't true, at all, in my case as I came from

PHOTO BY BILL COGAN

outside and joined the company. Admittedly I was given opportunities. I was sixteen, you see, when I first joined their company, so that all my stage training experience has been with them. If by that he means a product of their company, well, it is very nice of him to say it and I thank him.

Q. Miss Shearer, thousands of movie goers in this country remember you for your wonderful dancing and acting in "Red Shoes". You also appeared in "The Tales of Hoffmann" and "The Story of Three Loves". Are there any other motion pictures in which you have danced or acted?

A. Yes. I just finished one before we left on this tour. Again the accent is more on acting rather than on dancing. It is a light comedy by a very well known English playwright named Terence Rattigan. There is one dance sequence in it, a part of the third act of "The Sleeping Beauty" which I did enjoy doing very much. Otherwise, it is purely acting. I think this film will be shown in the next three or four months.

Q. Is it an English production?

A. Yes. It is.

Q. Almost everyone has heard tell of the fabulous salaries the picture industry pays its stars. I've also heard that Hollywood tried especially hard to lure you into signing a long term contract. Is this correct?

A. Oh ,yes. They like that system, but I'm afraid I don't, very much.

Q. Do you plan to do anything further in pictures, either here or abroad?

A. I do like to make an occasional movie, but I never want to sign a long term contract.

Q. Do you prefer movies or the stage for your dancing?

A. Well, that's obvious from what I just said, isn't it? I should take the theatre every time — but you must say "acting" from now on, because I'm not wishing to dance any more.

Q. My next query was, which do you prefer: dancing or acting? But it looks like you've already answered it, Miss Shearer.

A. Well, then, there's no reason for me to say anything, is there?

Q. Have you done any work on television?

A. Two performances only. One in England and one in New York.

Q. How does TV compare with the movies as a dance medium as far as you are concerned?

A. I hardly know from so little experience, but it's awfully difficult because Televsion at the moment, for a dancer, certainly seems to have the worst of it. Because it is dead, somehow. There's that dead feeling of not being in the theatre, of not

giving a live performance, but at the same time it is not totally dead. You do go from the beginning to the end. To me, there is something rather eery about it.

Q. Even more so than in motion pictures?

A. Well, there, it's all so broken up. It's a different thing altogether. With pictures there is no attempt at a fluent performance from start to finish. You may do the end of the film long before you touch the beginning, so you know from the start that it's a dead thing and you just take it piece by piece.

Q. Would you mind naming a few of the ballets in which you have danced?

A. Oh, my! Well, the five classical ballets: "The Sleeping Beauty", "Giselle", "Swan Lake", "Coppelia", "Casse Noisette", and all the romantic ones like "Les Sylphides" and the modern ones like "Symphonic Variations" and "Cinderella, another of Frederick Ashton's ballets. Really, it's awfully difficult to give a list, there are so many.

Q. Which, would you say, is your favorite, or do you have a favorite?

A. Well, yes. I think as most dancers who have danced it would say, "Giselle". It is definitely my favorite.

Q. Could you tell me your reason for this choice?

A. Yes. To begin with, the classical ballet is always more satisfying to do than the modern ballet. It has so much more in it. Also, with "Giselle", I particularly like it because, not only is it technically very demanding, you have to work very, very hard to begin to do it properly. Also, it has so much dramatic scope in it. There are so many different moods and facets to the story. ***(To be concluded next month)***

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LONDON FOOTNOTES

by

PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

LONDON

This has been another of those "coming attractions" months with no gem today, but plenty of promise for tomorrow. Most especially I am looking forward to the Yugoslav Ballet, Pilar Lopez, and to the new Frederick Ashton ballets. I admire Ashton's boldness in staging two new works at one performance — rare indeed.

Beryl Grey returned to her home company, Sadler's Wells, on January 1 and made a very happy new year of it. I had, being frank, almost forgotten that Beryl Grey could dance like this. Sure, confident sweeps of motion and really flawless dancing. She returned in "Swan Lake" — her best role? Certainly one of her finest. And she was ably partnered by John Field with the orchestra as the only assailant.

Violetta Elvin, who was to have journeyed to Milan to create the "Firebird" at La Scala found herself delayed until March on this project and so came back to appear with Sadler's Wells. In the meantime she followed in Yvette Chauvire and Margot Fonteyn's footsteps by starring in a charity gala at Copenhagen. And, from Copenhagen, Vera Volkova returned to London for one day — for the funeral of her friend, and her successor, George Goncharov. Volkova herself, of course, did more for English ballet in the few years she was teaching here than her stay in Copenhagen seems to show she realises.

Alicia Markova preceded her engagement at the New York Metropolitan by coming back to London to star in the Christmas pantomime, "Where The Rainbow Ends", with Anton Dolin. Dolin had flown from California for the show, leaving his Festival Ballet to do so.

During her few weeks here Alicia appeared on television, as the guest celebrity in "What's My Line", the English version of the CBS show. Quickly discovered, she would be advised to wear heavy boots next time. That catlike tread gives her occupation away!

Also in a new show, "Pay The Piper", is one-time Sadler's Wells dancer, April Olrich. Ballet dancers rarely outstand in musicals, but in all fairness I think it ought to be mentioned that April was bustin' out all over this Laurier Lister revue and was one of its few saving talents.

The Diaghilev Exhibition here had attracted well over a hundred thousand visitors before the doors closed, and now I hear Anna Pavlova is to be remembered in much the same way during 1956.

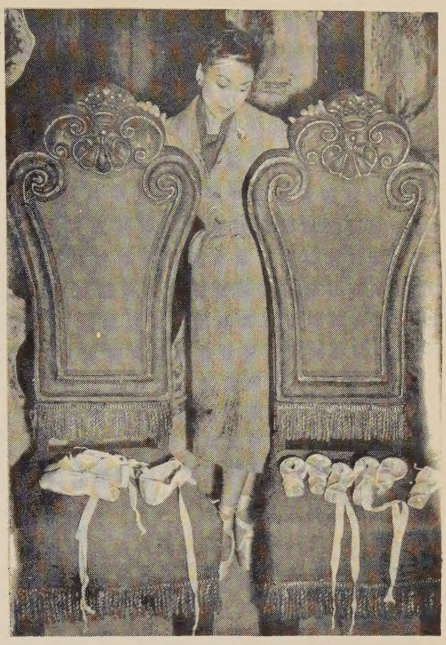
I have the greatest interest in these exhibitions, but often wish that as much thought went into giving work to dancers as goes into this perpetual flowering of bedecked graves.

Frederick Ashton, the principal choreo-

grapher of Sadler's Wells, mounted two new ballets at Covent Garden on January 6. Few choreographers in my experience gamble on two works at a single premiere, so all the more praise for Ashton who did.

As it worked out, neither were masterpieces. But one was well worth including in the repertoire "Rinaldo and Armida". This work, to Malcolm Arnold's music (he also composed the "Homage to the Queen" score), was beautifully staged and decorated by Peter Rice and the choreography, if not inspired, was certainly expert, sure and with several rare touches.

Svetlana Beriosova created the principal role which, although still not giving her a role inside her own metier, does give her something quite worth dancing. Julia Farron, one of the company's "backbones", is given a creditable role, too, in "Sibilla". For Michael Somes the warrior is little enough as a character-



Margot Fonteyn

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ization, but his pas de deux with Beriosova is well-sustained.

The other ballet, all but unseen in front of the quite feverishly bad decor by Peter Snow, is a trifle in which the good spirits are soaked into and submerged by the gooey mess. Unrehearsed Balanchine is, I think, the truest and most rapid summary. "Variations on a Theme" of Purcell is the kind of ballet which I still dislike but which I do admit George Balanchine choreographes magnificently.

Ashton does not.

Generally, one thing puzzled me about the evening. Sadler's Wells director Ninette de Valois has spoken several times in favour of the three-act ballet. So why these constant "B" ballets?

Rinaldo and Armida would, inside the Imperial Russian pattern, have made a full evening ballet instead of the long **pas de deux** which virtually completes it now. Given a longer span it could, too, have dispensed with the programme note and made more feasible the enchantress's garden.

As January continued one of those archaic arguments brewed over from the dance reviews of the Sunday Times and into its letter column. Venerable critic Cyril Beaumont and one-time prima ballerina Karsavina broke into argument as to whether the dancer's creation of "The Firebird" for Fokine Diaghilev had been built upon a "bird of prey" thinking, or as a sympathetic fairy. Most writers jumped merrily into Karsavina's corner, including Anton Dolin and Keith Lester.

Beaumont's only mistake was his attempt to bolster his own opinion by quoting it as the opinion of others (and quoting from one of his own books to support himself!) It is better, always, to keep to "I" and never "we" in an argument. You never know what the "we" has said in an idle moment which can be quoted against you. Latterday Christian martyre have learned this lesson!

Beryl Grey and John Field dance 'Spectre de La Rose on BBC television.

Beaumont was quite correct in holding his opinion, he should have staked upon it, not hedged it off.

Briefly...

Moira Shearer, returned from the U.S. tour of "Midsummer Night's Dream", stepped into Dorothy Tutin's role in "I Am a Camera" for the provincial tour . . . George Goncharov, one of the better known teachers in ballet, died in London during January . . .Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet revived Selina, the satire by Andree Howard and Peter Williams to an audience which didn't know **quite** when to laugh . . . their next ballet will be Kenneth MacMillan's "Danse Concertantes" to Strawinski's score . . . who will be the first to mount a ballet in mambo tempo? Already one semi-ballet variety trio is staging a mambo routine to good reaction . . . And my personal ambition is to hear Sauter-Finnegan's "Sleigh Ride" used as a dance accompaniment . . . the Nora Kovach-Istvan Rabovsky story is to be published here as "Flying Feet" by the London Editor of a New York daily. ★

The Signature of Locality

by j marks

LOCALLY. . . .

The San Francisco Dance League will present Jacqueline Ogg and the Lyric Dance Group Mar. 10th at a local recreational center as the first event of their newly founded Reciprocal Choreographic Workshop. Mrs. Ogg, member of the faculty of San Francisco's State College's drama department, will speak and the Lyric Dance Group which she directs will demonstrate her theme: 'What is Lyric Dance and Drama?'

EDITOR'S NOTE: J Marks, who is the choreographer-director of the Contemporary Dancers had the thrill of seeing the group give its premiere performance on Feb. 25th at the Theatre Arts Colony in San Francisco. . .

. . . For some time I have heard about the engagement of Ann Halprin by the Baroness de Rothschild for the forthcoming series of modern dance in New York City. In preparation for this program which includes Martha Graham, Sybil Shearer and Valerie Bettis, Miss Halprin has scheduled a concert for early April at which time the two works she will perform in the east will be previewed by a San Francisco audience. Included in the program by the Halprin-Lathrop Company will be a new work by Mr. Lathrop along with three works from the standard repertory, Both dancers of imagination and finesse, my admiration for Halprin and Lathrop has always been intensified by their expression of sincerity and generosity. The privatism which so many artists draw about themselves and their field has never been displayed by these dancers. One always has the impression when speaking to Miss Halprin that dance is important and immense enough to include any number of dancers and choreographers. . .

Ann Halprin and Welland Lathrop from 'Minstrel Show'.

--Edloe Risling

DANCE PANEL. . .

I have spoken previously here of the somewhat new dance promoting organization in Santa Barbara known as Dance Theatre Incorporated. Not long ago I was invited by June Anne Lane, president of the group, to join with other California dance critics on a panel discussion which Dance Theatre was planning. The topic for this program was to be 'The State of Dance on the West Coast'. Having taken considerable interest in this subject, I was intrigued by the plan and accepted the invitation.

Founded in 1952 by a group of Santa Barbara dance enthusiasts, Dance Theatre Incorporated was originally formed to make possible the importation of dance to Santa Barbara with the hopes that in time the city would become one of the West Coast's dance centers. Since the earlier days there has been a growing interest in the creation of a west coast affiliation of various dance leagues and clubs which would make a more regular and profitable touring itinerary avail-

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able to all dancers worthy of performances. Thus far the organization has achieved quite an impressive record of performances in its locale with the booking of such artists as Pearl Primus, Iris Mabry, Carmen Maracci, Jose Limon, Frankel and Ryder, Eugene Loring and Shivaram.

The discussion held at the Lobero Theatre between Dr. Lois Elfeldt, chairman of the dance department at the University of Southern California, Henry Seldes, arts critic for the Santa Barbara Press and myself, began with the negative query: 'What is wrong with dance on the West Coast?'

Dr. Elfeldt discussed at length various aspects of dance-finance and expressed concern over the unfortunate 'excess' of East Coast dance events in our area to the exclusion of native talents. She stated that she knew of at least nine outstanding dancers who deserve, but are not receiving the benefits of public performance.

It was repeatedly pointed out that an organization such as Dance Theatre Incorporated should make efforts to bring new dance to public attention rather than to attempt with dire financial results the sole sponsorship of dancers who have gained renoun.

This writer brought up the aspects of re-educating the public concerning the

Jane Lane, president of Dance Theatre, Incorporated.

traditions and efforts of dance. As a means of helping to carry out my suggestions, the decision was made to hold classes in adult dance expression at the local high school. Also a photographic exhibition created by Phix Mozesson and myself is to be hung in the Santa Barbara Museum.

For many months now, this writer has been at work on a Master Plan for Future Dance Development in San Francisco. The project is by no means so simple as it may appear. Complication follows complication. But investigation into the matter compels me to believe that any city populated with people capable of appreciating and enjoying the works of little theatres, chamber symphonies and museums is the proper location for a theatre of the dance of imposing pertinacity and vitality.

NEW DANCE BOOK. . .

From Alfred A. Knopf comes news in San Francisco of a book long needed in the dance field. For student dancers and particularly students of the ballet, 'Dancers of the Ballet' by Margaret Atkinson and May Hillman will be of great value. Containing over forty short studies of outstanding ballet personalities with the accent on dance background, achievements, struggles and training, the book offers the student the encouragement and endorsement of his field which has heretofore been lacking. Publication was in mid-February.

●

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(2) By talking with others who have studied dancing at the particular school you're interested in.

(3) By inquiring as to what dance teachers' organization the teacher or school is a member of. Most recognized dance teachers are members of at least one old-line dance teachers' association — and such associations accept only ethical members.

As a closing thought, just bear in mind that the individual who brags that he's "never had a dance lesson in his life" is just wasting his breath . . . chances are his dance partner already knows it!

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INTERNATIONAL

FOLK DANCE CENTER

By W. G. Raffé

Cecil Sharp House, near Regent's Park in N.W. London, was re-opened in June 1951 after extensive renovations, required to repair the bomb damage inflicted by the Nazis in the quest of Kultur.

On the night of September 27th, 1940, I was back in London — in a break in my current duties concerned with camouflage work. My own house in Regent's Park was closed; I stayed with some friends on the edge of Primrose Hill; their house was about a quarter-mile distant from Cecil Sharp House. That night we got no sleep, under an extensive plastering from Jerry, who had not then been cured of night sneak raiding.

In the morning, on my way to the local Tube station at Camden Town, I looked in at Cecil Sharp House, and saw the futile and incredible damage done to this charming building. Luckily no one had been killed just then, and some clearing up was in progress. I returned to my work feeling more angry than usual at raids.

Cecil Sharp — to whom we are all indebted for his enthusiastic research and recovery of British folk-dance and folk music — died in June 1924. He had succeeded in arousing much public support on behalf of his efforts in the conservation of our priceless heritage. And the good work continued. He left his own library to the Society; and it may be consulted by any visitors from other lands.

An appeal was launched, for building a proper permanent centre, to contain books, records, musical scores; and to permit of lectures and dance practice and demonstrations. A site was bought in 1927 near Regents Park. A building Fund was opened; and support came from many sources. Notable, the Carnegie Trustees provided £5,000, and this gift was extended by the generosity of the President of the American Branch, Mr. James J. Storrow, who donated a similar sum.

In June 1930, the new building was opened by the President of the Board of Education, Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, a fitting memorial to Cecil Sharp. After the bombing, temporary repairs enabled the lower rooms to be used but full repairs had to wait. Princess Margaret re-opened the Cecil Sharp House last year; and it is now in full use, as the world's finest and oldest cultural centre for the study of folk dance ,country dances and origins of square dances. The library which is open in the usual regular hours daily (except during certain holidays) is freely accessible to all accredited visitors and students. There is a collection of phonograph records, most of which may be heard also, by arrangement with the keeper.

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By WALTER WHITMAN

RECENTLY the Can-Can has come to the fore by way of several films and plays, besides being featured in a number of variety shows. Before the war it was occasionally seen as a music hall turn, and there were various attempts to revive it in revue. Most theatregoers saw it, however, as danced by Massine and Lopokova in the ballet "La Boutique Fantasque." Thus for most people it has been associated with stage, film or music hall. Yet it began as a ballroom dance—one which thrived exceedingly in Paris in spite of, and perhaps because of, its banning by the authorities!

BALLROOM CAN-CAN

When first seen in Parisian dance halls the Can-Can was often called a Quadrille. The dancers formed up, four gentlemen facing four ladies, and the latter, during the high-kicking part of the dance, sought to kick off the men's "toppers"—for in those haunts in those days gentlemen invariably wore their top-hats, and kept them on while dancing the "Can-Can Quadrille." As so often happens when a new dance suddenly poduces a craze, the terminology which accompanied the Can-Can was not quite accurate. Strictly speaking, it was not a quadrille, but a contra-dance as couples faced each other (gentlemen and ladies in contra lines) instead of forming square sets as in normal quadrilles.

This dance was, to quote from an authoritative volume published in 1895, "introduced into all public halls, and government inspectors were appointed whose duty it was to arrest the performers of the Can-Can, and to fine or imprison them. But as we have seen throughout the history of dancing, edicts and anathemas are useless against it." At that time Paris had an enormous number of dance halls, for it was the world's pleasure-centre. The Can-Can was the rage at all of them!

It reached England, introduced here by men who staged private parties on the lines of the Parisian halls, but was not seen in public until, at a Leicester Square music hall, a lady who rejoiced in the name of "Wiry Sal" caused a sen-

The Can-Can as it was in Germany, from a painting by von Reznicek.

sation by dancing it on the stage. It has a melancholy influence in some British ballrooms to-day, for what is often called the Can-Can Two-Step, a high-kicking and most unbecoming version of the Military Two-Step is sometimes danced at certain resorts where the normal floor-control is not exercised.

For thirty years the Can-Can flourished in France, in spite of police opposition, before it appeared in public in Britain. How many were fined or suffered short terms of imprisonment for dancing it has never been revealed. And it all began at a Carnival Ball in the spring of 1832 at a place called the Variétés.

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SENSATION

This place was known for "surprises." Someone or other among the revellers almost invariably created a sensation, which kept the spot under close official watch, but was apparently good for business. It is recorded that one lady danced in a Quadrille "attired in nothing but her boa and her gloves." It was at a special annual ball that the Can-Can made its appearance, introduced—contrary to the general impression—by A MAN!

And by what a man! He had driven to the Variétés in a four-horsed coach, with postilions and out-riders carrying blazing torches. Later, the police received an urgent call; outrageous things were happening at the Variétés! For this gentleman of obvious wealth, handsome and cultured, had suddenly broken into the Can-Can. His friends did what he did. Others imitated them. Soon, to quote Boulenger's "Les Dandies," "All the dancers in the hall, male and female, began to imitate them. In a moment, there was nothing to be seen except high-kicking heels and flying petticoats." He goes on to relate how, "smiling though scandalised, the officers of order felt that there was nothing to be done but to turn the dancers out"—which they did.

But the man who started it all, with his friends, slipped into an adjoining cafe. Ten minutes later he was back, dancing like fury, with a packed house once more doing the Can-Can!

A day or two later, the proprietor of the Variétés called to say: "Never mind the police. Come whenever you can and start-off the Can-Can. You're good for trade!" Or words to that effect.

"LORD CAN-CAN"

The news went round Paris that a famous English Peer had introduced the Can-Can into a ballroom packed with well-known people. And when, for five years running, the same handsome man came by coach, and with blazing torches as before, and led the revellers in the "Quadrille Eccentrique," "Lord Can-Can" became an almost legendary figure. But the truth was that Lord Henry Seymour, the peer popularly credited with these exploits, had nothing whatever to do with them. He had a "double" however—a man who was the living image of himself.

This man, of humble origin, had very charming manners, and not only did he resemble the poet Lord Seymour facially, but he possessed many of the latter's characteristics. Both were fine physical types, excellent at athletic games and splendid boxers. In an interesting article which appeared in the "Dancing Times" in 1933, Francis Gribble describes this man, La Battut, as being Anglo-French but illegitimate. His father, a prosperous English chemist, paid an impoverished French nobleman to claim and educate him. Thus the boy was educated as Comte Charles de la Battut.

The chemist died and left the boy a substantial fortune. La Battut became a well-known dandy, maintaining an expensive flat in the heart of Paris, keeping horses, and generally living in the lap of luxury. It was he who seized upon a crude dance hitherto seen only in the lowest dives in Paris, and introduced it to the ballroom. And the merry company of pleasure-lovers he had gathered around him were his associates when, at the Carnival Ball in 1932, the Can-Can emerged from the squalid haunts it had hitherto "graced," to become the sensation of Paris.

Of course, La Battut's friends knew perfectly well that he and he alone was responsible for the dance's introduction to the ballrooms. But it was useless for them to try to convince others that the "Can-Can King" was

(Reprinted from DANCELAND, London, England.)

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anyone other than the English poet and peer, "Vive Lord Seymour" the crowd would cry whenever La Battut was seen in public. "Vive Lord Can-Can!"

Having run through his fortune, La Battut eventually left France for Italy, and died soon after arrival there. That made no difference so far as "Lord Can-Can" was concerned, the Parisians still crediting Lord Seymour with the dubious honour. "Both men," to quote Francis Gribble, "were equally indignant; the one because he was being robbed of his glory, the other because he was being made to look ridiculous."

VERY CRUDE

The pictures which remain with us of the early Can-Can experts, some of whom attained international fame, reveal that as danced in the ballrooms it was a very crude affair. Four ladies in a row all kicking in different directions, one with foot raised high in second position aerial, and clasping her foot with one hand, the others kicking some one way, some the other, make a strange contrast to the well-drilled Can-Can teams of stage, film or cabaret.

These ballroom Can-Can dancers did not wear, as the Moulin Rouge and Bal Taberin girls do (whom many readers have seen) special stage costumes, but wore their ordinary clothes. The result was, in days when voluminous petticoats were the fashion, a lavish display of these garments and the effect, to judge from old prints, was frankly ugly.

One of the most famous of Can-Can "Queens" was La Goulue of the Moulin Rouge team, who sometimes did the splits in the course of the Quadrille. Ralph Nevill, who once took her to supper ("a meal to which Can-Can dancers were particularly partial") says in his "Days and Nights in Mont-

(page 102)

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by John Martin

May I Write the Next Dance?

(The Second of Two Parts)

When Fokine was a student in the Imperial Ballet school at St. Petersburg, he and his colleagues were forced to study a notation method devised by Stepanoff, but apparently none of them took it very seriously, and, indeed, it was fairly sketchy. Nevertheless, it was this method (together with some highly personal hieroglyphics) that was employed by the late Nicholas Sergeiev, longtime regisseur of the Imperial Ballet, in recording many of the classics of the repertoire, and without his recordings the recent revivals of *Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty* and *Gizelle* would have been all but impossible in Western Europe. Whether his notes can be interpreted by anybody else now that he is gone is highly problematical, but they served their purpose admirably with him at hand to translate them into action.

The systems of the past have varied widely in thoroughness and approach. Some of them combined a tracing of the floor plan of the dancers with arbitrary symbols, similar to shorthand, to indicate the movements of the body in elevation; others combined floor plans with pictorial diagrams of the body movements — "stick figures," as they are sometimes called; still others made adaptations of musical notations, with movements indicated by the shape and color of notes, their position on the staff and their stems and flags.

'MAY I WRITE THE NEXT DANCE?' is reprinted from THEATRE ARTS.

The sign for bending placed after the torso symbol shows it is slumped.

Photographs by Roderick MacArthur

The method employed for Miss Holm's *Kiss Me, Kate* dances is a modern one which has generally won the confidence of the dancers in this country. It was invented by Rudolf Laban in Germany approximately fifty years ago and has since undergone extensive development both by him and by a number of his pupils in different countries.

Its American center is an organization called the Dance Notation Bureau in New York, headed by Ann Hutchinson. The bureau not only supplies scribes to write down the compositions of choreographers (it is under contract to notate the entire repertoire of the New York City Ballet), but also conducts classes and correspondence courses in both reading (which is simple) and writing (which is more difficult, since it involves an ability to analyze movement), publishes a news letter and is now at work on a textbook for general circulation, with Laban's blessing.

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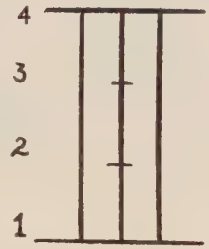
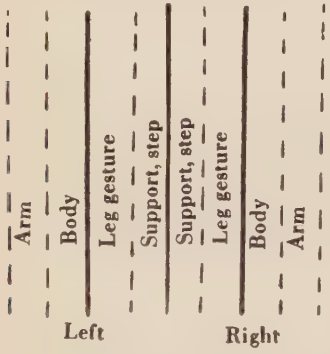
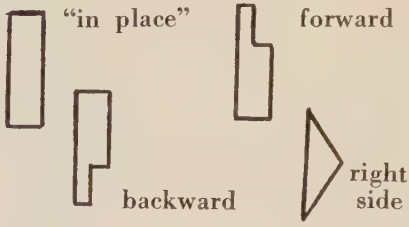


The Laban system uses a three line vertical staff which represents the body, the center line of the staff being the line through the body dividing right and left. The staff is read from the bottom up, and is divided off into bars to show the passage of time, much as is the musical staff.

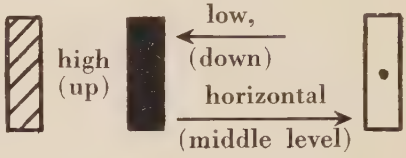


Each column in this staff is used for a different part of the body. Next to the center line are written the supports, usually ordinary steps, but on occasion, supports on the knees, hands, etc. The next column out on either side is used for leg gesture (movements not carrying weight). The third columns are used for body movements, and the fourth columns for the arms. Additional columns can be used on either side to take care of movements of the hands, fingers, head, etc.

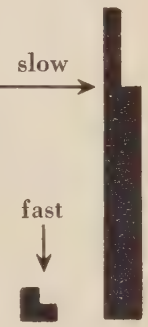
The basic direction symbol, corresponding to the note in musical notation, is a rectangle, which, in itself, shows no direction, (i.e., "in place"). This shape is modified to indicate the different directions.



The different levels of movement, high, low or horizontal, are shown by the different shading of the symbols.



The basic premise of lengthening or shortening the symbol to indicate the time value makes rhythm easy to read. A short symbol indicates a quick movement, the action being completed in a short space of time. A long symbol shows a slow movement, its length representing the time taken to complete the action.



The economy of the system is evident in that one symbol indicates: the part of the body that moves (by its placement on the staff), the direction of the movement (by its shape), the level (by its shading), and the rhythmic time value (by its length). The other main categories of movement, rotations and flexing and extending are used for all parts of the body.

rotations

bending

(flexing)

stretching

(extending)

In spite of the complexities of movement, there are comparatively few symbols used, movement being analyzed as variations and combinations of the basic possibilities. The system is built so that simple movement is written simply, the additional factors and more specific details being added to the basic forms where they are needed.

A separate staff is employed for each dancer or each group of dancers making the same movements, just as in an orchestral score. Where two dancers join hands, a line is drawn from the hand symbol on one staff to that on the other. Any contingency that arises can be met by logical and reasonably transparent means, in an extremely well thought out system.

To be sure, all systems for writing down the movement of the body in detail are bound to be complex, for the body has a great many members capable of individual movement, with all the dimensions of space to be considered as well as time and dynamics. But when the score of a ballet is compared with that of a symphony, there is not any outstanding difference in the degree of complexity. The orchestral score involves many staves, several clefs, key signatures and the consideration of "transposing" instruments. If we were as familiar traditionally with dance notation as we are with musical notation, it would doubtless present a much less formidable appearance.

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The argument that is most frequently used against the use of dance notation is that the movie camera can do the job much better. That is a lazy man's argument. Indeed it is no argument at all, for the movie camera records a performance while notation records a composition.

We certainly need films of our great performers in action for the archives, just as we need records of our great singers and our great orchestras. But we must have written scores of our great compositions, in dance as well as in music.

As for the copyrighting of dance notation scores, the lawyers are still arguing about how much protection it gives the choreographer. But if the copyrighting of a musical score secures the performing rights to that musical composition, logic would demand that the copyrighting of a dance score must similarly secure the performing rights to that dance composition.

The Dance In Chicago

ROD QUIROS

SPANISH DANCE
TAKES OVER CHICAGO. . . .

Last month Chicago saw two major Spanish Dance companies simultaneously. The little heralded and almost unknown company, 'Ballets Espagnols. Teresa and Luisillo' took the town by surprise and settled down for a nice three week engagement. Jose Greco brought his company for a short run at the Opera House.

'Ballets Espagnols' provided some of the liveliest and exciting entertainment we have seen for a long time. Its stars, Teresa and Luisillo, are a magnificent pair: she of dark beauty, intense and elegant; he, a fantastic technician with a marvelous style They are perfectly matched and bring nobility of style to everything they do. How beautiful they were in 'El Prisionero', the two lovers separated by a prison wall; and how intense and passionate in the magnificent 'Luna De Sangre', a Romeo and Juliet story told without any accompaniment, aside from that made by the dancers with their feet and fingers. Yet, how light, gay and amusing they can be, as in 'Ronda Huertana'.

This great pair alone would make an exciting program, but they know they are part of a company, and in this case, a wonderful, dynamic company. Their male dancers are an exceptional lot; the temperamental Pablo Canas, the young Felix Rodrigues, Alberto Mas, who can make an audience laugh without end, the stylized Antonio Cano and the gypsy-like Miguel Carmona. The girls are more than adequate with Carmen Aracena and Mercedes Molina at the head. A magnificently wild singer is Maria Vivo.

The entire production is supervised and choreographed by Luisillo. His choreography is always fresh and interesting. We certainly hope they return soon.

⊕ ⊕ ⊕

At the immense Opera House, Jose Greco presented his group to a great disadvantage. All Spanish dancing needs, by nature, a small theatre where the audience can feel close to the performers. The huge Opera House is no place for this type of dancing, for even in the front row you are a long distance from the stage due to the large orchestra pit.

Mr. Greco has been here several times before and each year his company seems to deteriorate more and more. Now it is no longer a company performance, but a concert of Spanish dance, made up mostly of Mr. Greco. He is still a striking figure with great theatrical qualities, but the meaning of the Spanish dance still eludes him. His production has lost its Spanish taste. It has been glamorized with hideous costumes of flourescent chartreuse, red and orange.

Although new dances have been added to the repertoire, none is of any great significance. Lola de Ronda and Luis Olivares are still soloists and this year Paul Haakon has been added to the personnel. Teresa Maya is back, but one can't help missing her brother, Juanele Maya, whose numbers used to be the highlights of the evening. . . .

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FAREWELL MAC. . . .

A bit of sunshine went out of our life with the passing of J. S. McCowan on February 9th, 1955.

Mac, as he was known to his many adult friends, and Daddy Mac to countless youngsters, had toured most of the leading vaudeville circuits with his wife during his early years. But for the greater part of his life he taught Tap, Acrobatic and Ballroom dancing on the west coast. He coached dancers and acrobats by the score for the movies as well as for the Fanchon & Marco circuit. He taught many names well known in the dance world today, and Horace Heidt never fails to credit Mac with the training the latter gave him and his band prior to their first trip to Paris.

In 1915 Mac joined the 'International Association of Masters of Dancing', now known as the 'Dance Masters of America'.

Incidentally, Mac was Charley Baker's first Tap teacher. At 88 he was still coaching acrobatics at the Baker Studio in Montebello, California.

Mac had a way with people, and especially with children—for he loved them all. And anyone fortunate enough to have known him could not help but benefit from such an acquaintanceship, for his philosophy of life was tried and true.... he lived by the 'Golden Rule'.

Mac's funeral bespoke the friendships he had with young and old alike, for there were as many youngsters and teenagers in attendance as there were adults.

J. S. McCowan was 89 when he died. On the tablet that heads his grave at Forest Lawn is imprinted the following legend: 'To our dancing master and philosophical friend—life's work well done.'

Yes, today a bit of sunshine went out of our life. May God bless you Mac. . . .

martre" that she was "a great, robust blonde — much more amusing throwing her legs about than in private conversation." She later became a lion-tamer.

The old photograph reproduced with this article shows five of the most famous Can-Can dancers of the Moulin Rouge, all of whom attained international fame. They are not dancing a "show," but, as will be noted, are engaged in a Quadrille" in the ballroom—that aptly known as the Quadrille Eccentrique, or, if you prefer it, the Can-Can!

☆

At Le Moulin Rouge during the late 1800s . . . this was the Can-Can. From left to right, the dancers are La Sauterelle, Nini Patte en L'Air (sic), La Goulue, Mome Fromage and Grille d'Egout. Photo by courtesy of H. Danielson, Charing Cross Road.

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DANCE MASTERS of OHIO held a One-Day Convention, Feb. 13th at the Deshler-Hilton Hotel in Columbus, Ohio. The program included: Tap, Mary Louise Megert; Ballet, Sylvia Hamer; Character, Virginia Garrett; Costuming, Bob Vorreyer; Modern, Gene Rollins and Ballroom, Dottie Roffe. A banquet and floor show rounded out the day's program.

ASSOCIATED DANCE TEACHERS of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA held a One-Day Normal Feb. 13th at the Red Shoes Dance Academy at Los Angeles, Calif. Guest teachers from the DMC included: Stanly Kahn, Advanced Tap, and Imogene Woodruff, Teen-age Ballroom. ADTSC teachers included: Olga Fricker, Pre-Ballet Cecchetti; Al Gilbert, Children's Rhythm Dances; Michael Panaieff, Intermediate & Advanced Ballet; Brownee Brown, Modern Jazz; Audrey Share, Character Dances and Gladys Bowen, Sophisticated Ballroom. Grace Rocklin and Eric Liedberg taught Tango & Mambo while Dorothy Lee Tifal instructed a class in East Indian Dances. Also instructing in Popular Ballroom was Herbert Glass.

DANCE MASTERS of WISCONSIN held a meeting on Feb. 20th at the Adele Artinian Dance Studio in Milwaukee, Wis. The Following teachers taught: Charlotte Heil, Baby Dances; Roberta Reyberg, Character Dance; June Rold, Baby Hawaiian; Lois Martens, Tap; Fred Hensey, Technique & Professional Tap Routine. A Ballroom Forum was also held. Luncheon was served to teachers and guests.

1955 SUMMER CAMP

The George Williams College announces its 3rd Geneva Folk and Country Dance School to be held July 2nd to the 10th at Williams Bay, Wisconsin under the leadership of Gretel and Paul Dunsing and Phil Merrill.

Courses will be held in Internation Folk Dancing and American Square Dancing. Further information may be had by writing to the George Williams College, Chicago, Ill.

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NEW BALLET BOOK OUT

'First Steps in Ballet' is the title of Thalia Mara's new book which was published by Doubleday-Garden City Books on March 10th.

A talented writer and ballerina, Miss Mara's writings have appeared in various dance publications, including Dancing Star magazine. Thalia Mara, with her husband and partner, Arthur Mahoney, operate the successful 'School of Ballet Repertory' in New York City.

MARGOT FONTEYN WEDS

Prima ballerina, Margot Fonteyn, married Robert Arias in Paris on Feb. 6th.

Miss Fonteyn will remain with the Sadler's Wells Ballet as prima ballerina and according to word received from the Hurok offices, she will appear in the United States next season on the Sadler's Wells Ballet tour which opens at the Metropolitan Opera House Sept. 11th in N. Y. City.

Mr. Arias is a Panamanian attorney.

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Dance of the Easter Bunnies.

Pas de Trois

Choreography: Mme. Vonka. Music: "Huntsmen's Chorus" from der Freischutz by C. M. von Weber. Bars

The three dancers are arranged in a triangle formation at right wings. Left foot is 5th front, demi-plié position.

1. Entrance: Coming in a circle front stage, do two slow and three quick Jetés (4 bars. Continue this in a circle ending middle back stage. At the end of the 16th bar, step on Right foot, raising Left foot sur le cou de pliéd front. 16

2. Glissade front with Left foot leading, into Assemble with Right to 5th front, plié and execute a Pirouette to the right en dehors, changing Right leg from front to back during turn (4 bars). Repeat this combination coming front. 8

3. Right foot is now 5th back. Plié and execute two Grand Pas de Chats and three quick ones in a circle to the right. Repeat. 8

4. Bourée Tour in place to Left, raising arms to 5th position en haut. 2

5. Left foot is 5th front. Sissone into Arabesque twice forward, going into Petits Tour backstage. Repeat. 8

6. Bourreé tour in place, arms coming up front to 5th en haut and on 4th bar coming down sides to 2nd. 4

7. Execute a circle to the Right Arabesque sauté into a pirouette en dehors, raising disengaged foot to knee (2 bars). Repeat this combination in a circle. 12

8. Grand Plié into Grand Battement, out of circle, four times. 8

9. End with a Bourée tour in place (2 bars) and Reverence. 3

by Mme. Vonka, 1005 Chestnut Street, San Francisco

'It shall have as its purpose: To promote, encourage and stimulate more interest in smooth ballroom dancing; to create friendship and good fellowship among members of the National Smooth Dancers, Inc,' so reads in part, Article 1, Section 2, of the By-laws of the Golden Gate Chapter of the NSD. Although the G.G. Chapter has always emphasized the second part, stressing sociability rather than contest dancing, it has also observed the first part.

Accordingly, at the beginning of 1954 President Sam Green announced that Cups would be given the two men and women who showed the biggest improvement in dancing during the year. His six appointed judges, three men and three women, were 'top secret' until the Club Christmas party. Holding their Cups are winners: (left to right) Evelyn Prince Leo Simon, Olga Nelson, Lloyd Nelson and Tosca Binet. — Florence Kolos

Lois Story, formerly from Stateside, now has her own dance studio in the Hawaiian Islands. Left to right are: Lois, Georgie, Paule and Paul Story.

The De Leonardo brothers, Tony and Joey, have been studying dancing since the age of three. They hope to help pay their ways through college with their dancing. Incidentally, the boys are the motivating power inside the 'horse'. Tony and Joey hail from Sunnyvale, Calif. and at present are studying ballet at the San Jose Academy of Ballet.

—Woodward's Studio

BABY BALLERINA (Continued)

AL GILBERT

DANCE (16 Bars)

STEP ONE

Meas.	Counts	Terms
1	1, 2	glissade R to 1st position
	3, 4	jete' R
2		Reverse Measure 1.
3	1, 2	jete' R
	3, 4	jete' L
4	5, 6	jete' R
	7, 8	saute to 1st position
5-8		Repeat Measures 1-4.

STEP TWO

9	1-4	bourree' to R with R foot front
10	5-7	R bourree' turn
	8	down in 5th position, R front
11, 12		Reverse Measures 9, 10.
13	1, 2	jete' R
	3, 4	jete' L
14	5, 6	jete' R
	7, 8	jete' L
15, 16	1-6	6 Emboite', beginning R, making complete R turn, ending facing D. S.
	7	curtsy R back L
	8	hold

NOTE: The following 16 bars added to the above routine will give you 48 bars, for children a little older. Especially arranged to STEPPING TONES RECORD NO. 203 (Second section of "B" side).

STEP THREE

17	1, 2	glissade R to 1st position
	3, 4	arabesque R
18	5-8	4 hops in R arabesque, making complete R turn
19-20		Reverse Measures 17, 18.

–An AL GILBERT routine. P.O. Box 36479 Hollywood 36, Calif.–

Meas.	Counts	Terms
21	1, 2	step R fwd
	3, 4	point L toe fwd
22	5, 6	step L fwd
	7, 8	point R toe fwd
23, 24		Repeat Measures 21, 22.

LYRICS

9. And so, Dear Mom, and you too, Dad,
10. Please say you're pleased with me.
11. And, Teacher Dear, you've helped so much,
12. I hope you all agree.

EXPLANATION OF GESTURES

(Done simultaneously with above lyrics)

9. And so, Dear Mom, and you too, Dad,

   Step on R in 4th position on "SO"
   Point to R with R hand on "MOM"
   Point to L with L hand on "DAD"

10. Please say you're pleased with me.

    Close R front to 5th position on "SAY"
    Clasp hands in front as if pleading.

11. And, Teacher Dear, you've helped so much

    Open R foot to 2nd position. Face slightly to S. R. as if to teacher standing in the wings, also gesture there with R hand.

12. I hope you all agree.

    Close R to L in 1st position, speaking directly to audience.
    Step L to L, curtsy R X back L on "A-GREE"
    Then immediately throw a kiss with both hands.

ACROBATICS & TUMBLING

BY JAMES A. ROZANAS

This is the 22nd in a series of illustrated ACROBATIC and TUMBLING tricks by one of America's foremost authorities on the subject. Why not start a scrapbook of these excellent illustrations — or better, yet, file them in a permanent **DANCING STAR BINDER** each month.

CRADLE

From a standing position, start exactly the same as for a regular flip-flop and the moment the body whips up and back into a momentary handstand, pull the head forward down on the chest and bend the elbows so that the body lands on the floor in a nipup position, with the legs over the head and the toes a few inches from the floor. (Be sure that the head does not touch the floor.) Hold for a few minutes and then do a nipup. When springing up and back for the cradle, the minute the hands touch, pull the stomach in which will slow the legs up and keep them from whipping over too fast.

MULE KICKS

From a handstand position, snap the legs down to the floor and immediately spring up from the floor, pulling the arms up and back past the body, whipping the legs back and up in the air, and then quickly bring the arms down and land in a momentary handstand. Repeat movement at least eight or ten times. In doing a good mule kick it is possible to lift the body a couple of feet from the floor with each leg whip and arm swing. Mule kicks can also start from a standing position and then jump from both feet into a handstand and keep repeating.

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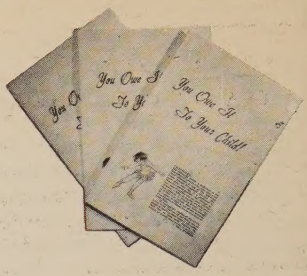

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